

Some Stuff That Catholic folks believe

There are some things that the catholic church believe in and functions in, that might be very very influential to all Christian churches.

Maybe we should study some of these things and see if you agree with these ideas...

Perhaps you are familiar with "succession". The catholic church believes very much in the concept of succession--the passing on of authority--"ruling power" from one person to another.

You might be familiar with the idea that the catholic church holds, that Peter was the first pope. Now anyone who reads the Bible has a very hard time finding this concept! Catholics will tell you it is written into some small things that Jesus said to Peter. The catholic church believes that since these things were said to Peter, he was given authority over the early church, and also that the apostles were in authority over the church as well.

This absolutely cannot be the case.

This is, in fact the "square one" of incorrect teaching in the catholic church, and this wrong beginning concept has infected nearly every other Christian church as well.

25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28)

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. (Luke 22:25-26)

Jesus clearly and specifically said that in the new covenant, believers are not to exercise authority one over another among themselves. Jesus says that He did not do this. He said that we are not supposed to either.

These statements of Jesus are the most ignored teaching in the Bible.

Hundreds of years ago, the catholic institution brought this error into Christianity, and it has put a strangle hold on Christian function and the definition and purposes of ministry within the church.

In this study we will focus in on one of the branches of this error, the concept of succession.

Since catholics believe that Jesus exercised authority, "ruled over" His followers, they believe that this authority to rule was then passed on to others. Now we must understand that Jesus did give authority to His followers--but it is authority, power over, very specific actions. Jesus gave his followers authority over Satan, authority to pray for the sick, and authority to spread the Gospel. However, and we say this again, He demanded that they NOT exercise authority one over another among themselves. He gave a demonstration of a non-authoritarian system--apostleship. It simply means to work together in small groups, as equals. To all minister together and be lead by an authority who is not physically present. Jesus followed the authority of the Father in Heaven. The church, AFTER Jesus was ascended to the right hand of the Father, called Him it's Head. (This is the only true "succession: the bible tells us of--a succession of handing ruling authority between the Father and the Son--NOT a succession of handing off ruling authority to us sinful humans!)

What the catholic institution believes, and claims to make it the one true official "church" is this concept of succession. They believe that Jesus handed off ruling authority to the apostles, and they in turn, handed this ruling authority to "bishops". And then, the "bishop" has held onto this ruling authority ever since. The first pope was the bishop of Rome (a title the current pope still holds). Bishops, according to the catholic dogma, are the official rulers of the church, they have authority over the priests and the congregation. They believe that the functioning of the church is all about human authority and hierarchy.

I know what you protestant folks are saying--"Well I'm glad I'm not in that church! All that hierarchy! yuck--it;'s not right!"

Well, that is good and true, but, let's look at some other ideas that just might be in your church too!

Now, since Catholics believe in this succession principle, they believe something that most Protestants would consider very unusual.

The catholic church believes in the Bible. They believe that all the Bible is from God and holy and should be used for teaching and learning. Okay, so far we all agree.

But, what they also believe is that the bible can be added to.

They believe that the pope, since he has been given this ruling authority from God, has the right to add to scripture. The dictates of the pope are to be followed just like scripture. Now right away I am sure this rubs a lot of protestants the wrong way! But what is really interesting is that the very most influential "additions" which have been made by the popes were made hundreds of years ago. In fact, these ancient dictates, these ancient "additions" to scripture are so 'set in stone" that popes of today can barely, hardly, effect them or change them. The popes of today are usually really nice guys, but the truth is that they are actually not able or willing to make any great changes in the ancient traditions.

So, the catholic church is actually run by the decisions of people who lived hundreds of years ago.

What did they invent?

The mass.

The "church service"

The church service is not in the Bible, it was invented by people who lived after the time of the writing of the Bible. "Church fathers"--bishops"--the truth is that no one really knows who invented it. The recorded history goes back to the 4th century, and at that time, the church was under the heavy influence and control of Rome. At that time, the "church service" was codified--made a law--by people who believed they had authority to add to scripture.

They decided that the church should imitate old covenant Israel, specifically the sacrificial laws of Israel, the functions in the old covenant that had to do with atonement. For some reason they forgot that Jesus had fulfilled these laws by His death and resurrection in the new covenant.

Their additions to scripture contradicts scripture.

Oh, now they know how to defend themselves. There are huge list of buzzwords which are used to defend the principles of the mass. "Submit to the rule"--"order"--"assembly"--the "office" of ministry. A careful study of these buzzwords will show they are incorrectly translated into scripture (since, think about it--"church authority" always translates the Bible for us!)

Now it's time for protestants to look in the mirror.

The fact is that the Protestant church service is very much based on the catholic mass.

Do we realize that the mass was invented by people who believed they had the authority to add to scripture?

addendum

One of the other effects of the "succession" belief of the catholic institutions that they believe they are the one true correct church. The major argument they give for this concept is that they see so many different Protestant churches and say "they can't be from God since they all disagree so much" ("God is a God of order"--here we go again with buzzwords! Someone should take that verse in context and read 1Corinthians 14 which describes a home meeting of believers where everyone can speak and teach--that is the "order" that the Bible asks of us!)

The fact is that disagreement and disobedience are very Biblical.

Look in the Bible. In the book of revelation, Jesus is shown judging churches in different locations. Each of these churches is obedient or disobedient in different ways. Some churches were doing right things, others were doing different things that were wrong. Some were doing right and wrong things at the same time.

Does this sound like "one universal obedient regulated church"?

I don't think so!

Look at the letters written by the apostles to the churches (which had been supposedly "handed off" to those authoritarian bishops). Each church had different obedience's and disobedience's. Each church was doing some things right and some things wrong. They needed to be reminded of what the apostles had taught them and the apostles were only

relating what Jesus had taught them...

Be ye imitators of me, even as I also *am* of Christ. (1Corinthians 11:1)

You see the truth is that the church is not at all about human authority, ministerial authority, hierarchy. It's not supposed to be at all.

In the Bible were are seeing sinful humans trying their best to imitate the perfect example of Jesus.

This is what the church is.

This is what the church is supposed to be.

What this means is that we always need to be corrected.

We always need to be open to change.

What has happened is that the rules for operating the church were "written in stone" hundreds of years ago, by people who supposedly had the God-given right to "overwrite" the Bible!

Do we realize this?

Do we realize the ramifications of this?

Do we realize that when we have these "written in stone" rules for church operation and function and definitions of ministry we are not in the position to be corrected by God?

If only we all could just realize that we are imperfect people, following a perfect God.